

ENGLISH CATHEDRALS.

I.



ABOUT twelve hundred year ago, a band of Scottish monks, belonging to the Benedictine order, who perhaps had been invited by Wilfrid, left Melrose Abbey, and crossing the English border, founded at the village of Ripon, in Yorkshire, a monastery. The Institution flourished for

three hundred years or more, but in the tenth century, as an incident of one of those border wars, then, and for centuries the bane of the Northern counties of England, it was destroyed by fire. Rebuilt by the pious, from time to time additions and alterations were made, the present choir and nave being built during the reign of the second Henry, or between 1154-1189. It was dedicated to Ss. Peter and Wilfrid, the latter saint, who according to an old tradition was born near Ripon about the middle of the seventh century, being one of the chief workers for the re-conversion of Northumbria. In 1836, it became a cathedral.



In size it does not compare with many other cathedrals in England. It is nevertheless a very interesting ecclesiastical edifice. Its Crypt is of the Saxon period. The chapter house which is small, affords examples of Norman Architecture. The choir and nave, built as has already been mentioned in the latter half of the twelfth century, are in the main belonging to the transition period.

The great East window with its geometrical tracery and other portions of the period known as the decorative, Early English is represented in the west front, the two groups of windows, each consisting of five lancets being unmistakeable. While the screen, through which the choir is entered, affords a fine example of the Perpendicular.

The Crypt is regarded by Mr. King, an authority upon such matters, as the most perfect existing relic of the first age of Christianity in Yorkshire. It consists in the main of narrow arched passages; of a small chapel, to which entrance was had by the principal passage some forty five feet long; of a curious "funnel shaped" aperture, called St. Wilfrid's well on the left of the chapel, the original object of which can only be a matter for conjecture; and of an ossuary, where until 1866, human bones were arranged on the walls.

He who denies that there has been an Evolution, denies that there has been progress, development. The record of the progressive history of the human race, of human institutions, of art, manufactures, law, moral conceptions, is written in that which itself is a product of evolution, for some of the strongest arguments in favor of this law are supplied to the student of language as spoken or written.

The physical and natural worlds are not exceptions. He who reads carefully that great book in which God has preserved the records of what He has done, will find proof, that He has worked most wisely and most regularly. The relative positions of the various rock strata; the geological record, that is, the evidence that the rocks afford by their contained organic—plant or animal,—remains; the evidence to be gained by the study of existing animals and plants, all these point to the fact that there has been all along the line what is spoken of as an Evolution. The denial of Theistic Evolution, that is of the fact that the all-wise and all-powerful God has worked according to plan, has been one of the most efficient causes in driving men, who refused to surrender their belief in what they considered to be self-evident, into a belief in Materialistic Evolution. [Ed. C. R.]